

Message Text

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ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CU-04 OMB-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03

INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03

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R 220330Z MAR 74

FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1694

C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 4662

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PGOV, TH

SUBJECT: LAMPANG GOVERNOR WORRIES ABOUT STUDENTS AND BANGKOK
GOVERNMENT

FOLLOWING RECEIVED ACTION BANGKOK INFO KO KHA AIR STATION UDORN
CO DET III FROM AMCONSUL CHIANG MAI MARCH 21. REPEATED FOR YOUR
INFO:

QUOTE:

C O N F I D E N T I A L CHIANG MAI 144

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PGOV, TH

SUBJECT: LAMPANG GOVERNOR WORRIES ABOUT STUDENTS AND
BANGKOK GOVERNMENT

1. DURING BRIEF VISIT MARCH 20 TO LAMPANG, GOVERNOR
SAMRAN PUSAYAVANICH EXPRESSED TO US HIS ALARM RE STUDENT
SITUATION. HE BEGAN CONVERSATION BY SAYING HE SITTING
ON A POWDERKEG AND WISHED THAT HE COULD RETIRE NOW
INSTEAD OF REMAINING GOVERNOR FOR ANOTHER THREE YEARS.
HE CLAIMED LAMPANG HIGH SCHOOL AND TEACHER TRAINING COLLEGES
ORGANIZED INTO SOLID BLOC "INFLUENCED BY COMMUNISTS", AND
SAID BANGKOK STUDENT GROUP (PERHAPS FIST) SENT REGULAR
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LIAISON MAN TO LAMPANG TO CONTROL ACTIVITIES THERE.

2. GOVERNOR, WHO JUST ARRIVED FOUR MONTHS AGO FROM POST AS GOVERNOR OF CHAIYAPHUM IN NORTHEAST, SAID STUDENTS DEMANDING SOLUTIONS FROM HIM FOR INSOLUBLE PROBLEMS. WE NOTED LAMPANG HAD AVOIDED ANY MAJOR STUDENT DEMONSTRATIONS, AND HE AGREED. HOWEVER, HE SAID DEMANDS CONTINUED TO COME THROUGH HIS ASSISTANTS ON ISSUES OVER WHICH HE HAD NO AUTHORITY -- REMOVAL OF SCHOOL INSTRUCTORS, LOWERING PRICE OF RICE, ETC.

3. GOVERNOR CALLED SANYA GOVERNMENT "WEAK" AND TOO EAGER TO GIVE IN TO STUDENT DEMANDS. HE EXPECTED NEW ELECTIONS TO RETURN ANOTHER WEAK GOVERNMENT AND MORE CHAOS. ASKED IF A MILITARY COUP WOULD BE POSSIBLE, HE RESPONDED THAT HE HOPED SO. IT WOULD PROBABLY BE BLOODY, SINCE STUDENTS WOULD CHOOSE TO FIGHT, BUT IF THE MILITARY USED ENOUGH TANKS....

4. CONTINUING THE HARANGUE, GOVERNOR SAID INTERIOR MINISTRY NOT FUNCTIONING PROPERLY THESE DAYS, CALLING HIS MINISTER "WEAK" ALSO. GOVERNOR SAID MINISTER WOULD NOT BACK HIM UP WHEN IMPOSSIBLE DEMANDS PRESENTED, MERELY TELLING HIM "TO REMAIN PATIENT."

5. ASKED ABOUT OTHER LOCAL PROBLEMS, GOVERNOR SAID LAMPANG PROVINCE HAD LITTLE ARABLE LAND AND THAT FARMERS WERE POORER THERE THAN ONES HE HAD KNOWN IN NORTHEAST. CANNERY RUNNING AT ONLY TEN PERCENT CAPACITY, BECAUSE MANAGER HAD TROUBLE BUYING LOCAL FRUIT DUE TO RIDICULOUSLY LOW PRICES HE OFFERED. WAGES ALSO PITIFULLY LOW, SO THAT CANNERY OFFERED LITTLE IN WAY OF EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES.

6. COMMENT: GOVERNOR FELT BETTER ONCE HE GOT IT ALL OFF HIS CHEST. STUDENT THREAT APPEARS EXAGGERATED, AS LATER CONFIRMED BY TALK WITH OTHER LAMPANG RESIDENTS. FACT THAT GOVERNOR MAGNIFIED THREAT, HOWEVER, SHOWS CURRENT STATE OF MORALE AMONG A NUMBER OF CIVIL SERVANTS WHO HAVE PROBABLY SPENT ENTIRE CAREER IN GOVERNMENT SERVICE WITHOUT EVER HAVING OFFICIAL POSITIONS QUESTIONED. CONFIDENTIAL

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GOVERNOR SAMRAN ALSO IN UNEVIABLE POSITION OF REPLACING A FORMER LAMPANG GOVERNOR (NOW GOVERNOR IN CHIANG RAI) WHO WAS EXTREMELY POPULAR. MONTGOMERY UNQUOTE KINTNER

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